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Review of Bonjour Laziness: Jumping Off the Corporate Ladder

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[Bonjour Laziness: Jumping Off the Corporate Ladder](#)

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Bonjour Laziness: Jumping Off the Corporate Ladder by Corinne Maier,

New York: Pantheon Books, 2005, 137 Pages, ISBN: 0-375-42373-7

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This is an anti-leadership book if ever there was one. Or is it?

Anyone interested in the subject of corporate leadership is well aware of how many books are published every year on this subject. One could say that it started in 1982 with the groundbreaking book, "In Search of Excellence" by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, Jr. However, that was just the beginning. Since then we have had books on leadership written from every possible angle. From "Winning" by Jack and Suzy Welch to all the John Maxwell books to antidotes from former professional sports coaches such as "Wooden on Leadership" and even "Leading From the Heart" by Coach "K" from Duke University. There is "Good to Great" by Jim Collins and even books with titles such as the "Leadership Style of Attila the Hun" and "Jesus CEO". Even Al Dunlap, known to his former employees as "Chainsaw Jack" wrote a book on leadership.

Most of the popular books on Leadership focus on the positive aspects of leadership. Basically, get a good education, find a job that fits your skills and interests, work hard, work yourself up the corporate ladder and become a success. Oh yes, while all this is going on you might have to "pay your dues" whatever that might mean, within the constructs of a given corporate culture, but it will certainly be worth it once all those perks start rolling in. What about your subordinates? Hopefully they are looking out for themselves.

"Bonjour Laziness: Jumping Off the Corporate Ladder" offers the reader a somewhat tongue-in-cheek look at what might happen if someone or a group of employees were to take the exact opposite approach to their jobs. Basically, do as little as possible. The book, which has over 270,000 copies in circulation in France and 70,000 in Spain, also has rights to publication in over 19 other countries. Written with a certain amount of Gallic wit by French author and practicing psychoanalyst Corinne

Maier, the book at times is hard to read. Perhaps it's the translation or simply the French cultural mindset when it comes to work I am not quite sure. However, some of it is actually quite funny while at the same time on target with her observations. For instance, on the back of the dust jacket are two sections, one entitled "Are you willing to face the truth about work" and the other "Then here are strategies that you need to adopt". I won't list them all here but the following selection will give you an idea as her idea of corporate management.

Under the truth about work section we have:

- What you do is ultimately pointless. You can be replaced any day of the week by the first moron who walks through the door.
- You will not be judged by how well you work but by how well you conform

Under strategies needed to adopt the reader finds the following:

- Seek out the most useless positions. The more useless, the more difficult it is to

asses your contribution to the firm's assets.

- When you recruit people for temporary positions, treat them well; remember,

They're the only ones who actually do any work.

These observations are found throughout the book and are written in such a way that depending on your particular perspective may hit home or strike out, sorry for the baseball analogy. There are times when I found it hard to distinguish weather or not

the author was actually serious. But that's ok. Take the book with a grain of salt and those of you who have worked in a corporate environment might wonder why it took so long for someone to write what we have known all along.

THE SHRIMP HABIT

(And how it is destroying our world)

by Four Arrows with Brian Ellison

Vancouver: Trafford Publishing. October 2005

Reviewed Tony van Renterghem

Shrimp: A Priority topic for the Academy

We might sometimes excuse college and high school curriculae for not talking about the really important matters like war, global warming, peak oil or depleted uranium because of how complicated the solutions might be to these issues. Although I for one would disagree with such excuses, there is one new book out that makes it clear that the American shrimp-eating habit should be a discussion topic in every classroom, from kindergarten to graduate school.

This booklet, maybe even just its introduction, is intended to motivate most readers to stop eating shrimp, unless it comes from one of the few alternative sources that are not a travesty. And it works! I am already boycotting grocery stores restaurants and telling everyone I know. Eating shrimp (same as prawns) has major environmental and human rights consequences. Shrimp farms pollute and are polluting marine environments, drinking water and agricultural lands with tons of chemicals, antibiotics and organic waste. Nearly 40 percent of the world's "ocean nurseries"- the mangrove swamps- have been eradicated by bull dozers making room for shrimp farms. This

loss of mangroves contributed significantly to the hundreds of thousands of deaths from the recent Tsunami! Indigenous communities have been forced off their lands around the world, and many have been murdered by hired guns for resisting. If all this is not bad enough, the shrimp that people consume from these farms might be detrimental to your health.

Shrimp trawling (as in "shrimp boats are a comin'") is as destructive as the farming industry. Trawling nets destroy ocean floor habitat, decimates natural food supplies, and wastefully kill a myriad of sea creatures. An average of 95 percent of what trawlers scoop up is not shrimp, but rather turtles, sea horses, juvenile red snappers, and many other important and endangered fish

whose dead bodies are generally thrown back into the ocean. (Fishing for wild shrimp represents 2 percent of global seafood but one-third of total by-catch (accidental "by-product" of catching creatures other than what was intended.) The ratio of by-catch from shrimp fishing ranges from 5:1 in temperate zones to 10:1 and more in the tropics.

This needless ecological disaster is a world-wide phenomenon, but the good ol' USA is a major player. The shrimp industry in Texas alone is making in excess of thirty million dollars annually. George W. Bush has stumped the country in behalf of expanding these corporate get rich quick schemes. Seeking to tap into the world's fastest-growing food industry, he has supported

legislation for increasing fish and shrimp farms on and up to 200 miles out from U.S. shores. As per usual, the legislation sent to Congress contains no ecological protections, leaving it to the Secretary of Commerce to draft any rules "if the administration deems it necessary."

A more significant U.S. contribution to these problems is the fact that Americans consume fifty percent of the world's shrimp supply. Furthermore, most of the folks who eat shrimp are relatively well to do. It is not a food source for those in poverty.

All of this information will likely be news to you. In spite of thousands of scientific publications that reveal these facts, they rarely make it to the six o'clock news. It is not the kind of knowledge that mainstream media values. As long as the American, European and Japanese penchant for shrimp cuisine exists, there is money to be made. Why rock the shrimp boat? President

Bush has been stumping for shrimp farms in coastal Texas, despite the fact that much of the New Orleans disaster resulted from the commercial destruction of the Louisiana wetlands.

It is time for academic leadership to truly lead. This topic can be woven into many courses, from science and math to social studies and language arts. At the affordable price of less than 10 dollars, this booklet is sure to help students feel like there is indeed something they can do to make the world a

better place.

Reviewer: Tony van Renterghem is an incredible man. In his 85 years of “living life outloud”, he has served in the Dutch underground and is a well-known international activist and a film advisor for a number of well known documentaries including The Diary of Ann Frank.

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